New services by private cell phone operators

*406. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:
PROF. SAIF-UD-DIN SOZ:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the new services recently introduced by private cell phone operators like Airtel, Hutch, etc. and whether these are causing inconvenience to cell phone users;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether these are in accordance with approval from TRAI; and

(d) if not, what action Government are willing to take to curb such practices by private operators?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ARUN SHOURIE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) In terms of the TRAI Act, TRAI is, *inter-alia,* mandated to protect the interest of consumers of telecommunication service. TRAI has intimated that certain Cell Phone consumers have represented that they have been provided Voice Mail Service, which is a value added service, by the Cell Phone Service Providers without their consent. Some consumers had also reported that they faced difficulty in deactivating this service.

(c) Prior approval of TRAI is not necessary for offering Value Added Services by the Cell Phone Service Providers because tariff for cellular services is under forbearance.

(d) TRAI has advised all Cell Phone Service Providers to take subscribers' consent before providing them Voice Mail Service. They were also advised to discontinue this service, if offered, with immediate effect in respect of those subscribers who have not given their consent for it.

Creation of jobs for J&K

*407. SHRI T.S. BAJWA: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) the steps taken for achieving the goal set for creating 1.5 lakh jobs in two years for Jammu and Kashmir;

(b) whether any task force has been set up to oversee the work; and

(c) what is the present status on the employment generation front?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI SAHIB SINGH VERMA): (a) to (c) A task Force was set up for creation of one lakh employment/self employment opportunities in Jammu & Kashmir over the next two years. The Task Force has submitted its report and recommended creation of atleast one lakh jobs in various identified sectors during the period 15th August, 2003 to 14th August, 2005. Task Force has recommended monitoring of creation of employment opportunities on a monthly basis.

Vacant posts in North-Eastern Council

*409. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH-EASTERN REGION be pleased to state:

(a) whether several key posts in the North-Eastern Council have remained vacant for long, causing serious problems in the Council's functioning;

(b) if so, whether Government are contemplating to overhaul the structure of this Council; if so, the details in this regard; and

(c) whether the developmental targets fixed during the past five years were achieved?

THE MINISTER OF DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH EASTERN REGION (DR. C.P. THAKUR): (a) The details of the 9 Group 'A' posts, out of 26 such posts which are lying vacant in North-Eastern Council (NEC) Secretariat, Shillong, along with the period of vacancies, are given in the Statement *(See* below). Action has been taken to fill up all these posts. Additional charge is given to officers in position to ensure that normal functioning is not seriously impacted on account of this factor.

(b) There is no proposal at present for overhaul of the structure of the Council.

(c) For the Ninth Five-Year Plan period (1997-98 to 2001-02), the expenditure was Rs. 1950.64 crores, against the Budgetary provision of